

## SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

### Shops gutted in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Fire gutted at least 14 shops at Dharmapur bazaar in Gobindaganj upazila early yesterday. The fire originated from a tea stall at the bazaar and soon spread to the adjacent shops. The fire gutted goods and valuables at grocery, cosmetics, sweetmeat, fruit, medicine, saloon and other shops. The firefighters from Gaibandha and Sonatola reached the spot after an hour. Victims claimed that they incurred a loss of around Tk 25 lakh.

### Expatriate murdered

UNB, Pirojpur

A Dubai expatriate was killed by a thief at Nutan Nalbunia village in Bhandaria upazila early yesterday. The deceased was identified as Abdul Matin Hawlader, 35. He was scheduled to return to Dubai one week later. Police said when a gang of thieves were stealing chickens from Matin's house late at night, the members of the house woke up and raised a hue and cry. Hearing their shouts, neighbours rushed in and chased the thieves. Jamal Hawlader, one of the gang members, hit Abdul Matin with a sharp weapon while fleeing, leaving him dead on the spot. Local people caught Jamal and handed him over to police after giving him a good beating.



PHOTO: STAR

**Pabna Press Club on Saturday honoured two local journalists -- Mostafa Sotez of Daily Ichhamoti and Habibur Rahman of Daily Sangbad -- for their excellence in performance. Photo shows Sotez receiving the award.**

### 10 hurt in Sylhet clash

UNB, Sylhet

At least 10 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups over land dispute at Kahaigarh in Jointapur upazila on Saturday morning. Local people said there was a long-standing enmity between Golam Kibria of Kahaigarh and Marzanul Haque of Terratan area over a piece of 25 decimal land in Kahaigarh area. Police said an altercation ensued at about 11 am when the men of Marzanul went to Kahaigarh to take possession of the land. Later, both the groups equipped with lethal weapons and sticks attacked each other, leaving 10 people injured from both sides.

### Student commits 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinee allegedly committed suicide at village Dakkhin Dargapur in Assasuni upazila early yesterday. The victim was identified as China Khatun, 17, daughter of Ayen Uddin Gazi of the village. She was appearing at the ongoing HSC examination from Dargapur Collegiate School under Jessore Education Board. Quoting local people police said, China took her life by taking poison at their house at about 5:00 am. She died on the way to hospital. The girl committed suicide due to family feud, police said.



PHOTO: BATB

**British American Tobacco Bangladesh recently set up a drinking water plant on the premises of Jhenidah deputy commissioner's office in a bid to supply arsenic-free water. Photo shows the DC inaugurating the plant.**

### Man stabbed to death

UNB, Bogra

A man was stabbed to death by his rivals over land dispute at Darai village in Kahalu upazila on Saturday afternoon. The deceased was identified as Mahfuzur Rahman, 50, son of late Mobarak Ali of the village. Police said there was a long running dispute between Mahfuzur Rahman and some of his co-villagers over the ownership of a piece of land. As a sequel to the enmity, the rival group called Mahfuzur and took him to their house at about 2 pm. Later, they stabbed him indiscriminately, leaving him dead on the spot.

### 10 hurt in BCL infighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 10 BCL activists were injured in a clash between two rival groups over a programme at Oskhali under Hatiya upazila yesterday. The injured are Saiful Islam, Kashem Uddin, Mamun Uddin, Sahadat Hossain, Iraq Uddin, Azmir Hossain, Miron, Russel Ahmed, Alamgir Hossain and Mortuza Bahar. Among them, 7 injured activists were admitted to Hatiya upazila health complex. Eyewitnesses said, at about 4 pm, Hatiya upazila BCL organised a workers' meeting to mark the victory over Myanmar on ocean sharing at Oskhali bazaar where Shahrukh Miraj, publicity secretary of central BCL, attended as chief guest and Ibna Wazed Emon was special guest. When a BCL activist sought to address the meeting, his rivals opposed it, triggering a fierce clash.

## 'MONGA' IN LALMONIRHAT

# Seasonal unemployment hits *char* labourers

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Most of the day labourers in 90 *char* (landmass emerged from riverbed) villages of Teesta and Dharla river basin areas in the district are passing hard days due to seasonal unemployment and consequent *monga*, a near famine situation affecting the region almost every year during this time.

Taking the opportunity, local money lenders are giving loan to the hard-pressed farm labourers at high interest rates while many workers are selling their labour 'in advance' to the farm owners on condition that the money will be adjusted when the labourers get employed during the harvesting period.

But the arrangement of 'advance payment' costs a lot to the farm workers as the wages in such cases are fixed much lower than the usual rates.

A good number of people have gone to town areas in search of work.

The situation, which turns serious in absence of any government initiative to create employment for the *char* people during this time, will continue until boro harvest starts early June, locals said.

"Since the first week of April, I have remained unemployed although I go out regularly in search of work. I don't see any hope till boro harvest starts," said Monsur

**Jobless for days, a farm labourer shows all signs of despair, sitting on the yard at his home at Kalmati Char village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.**

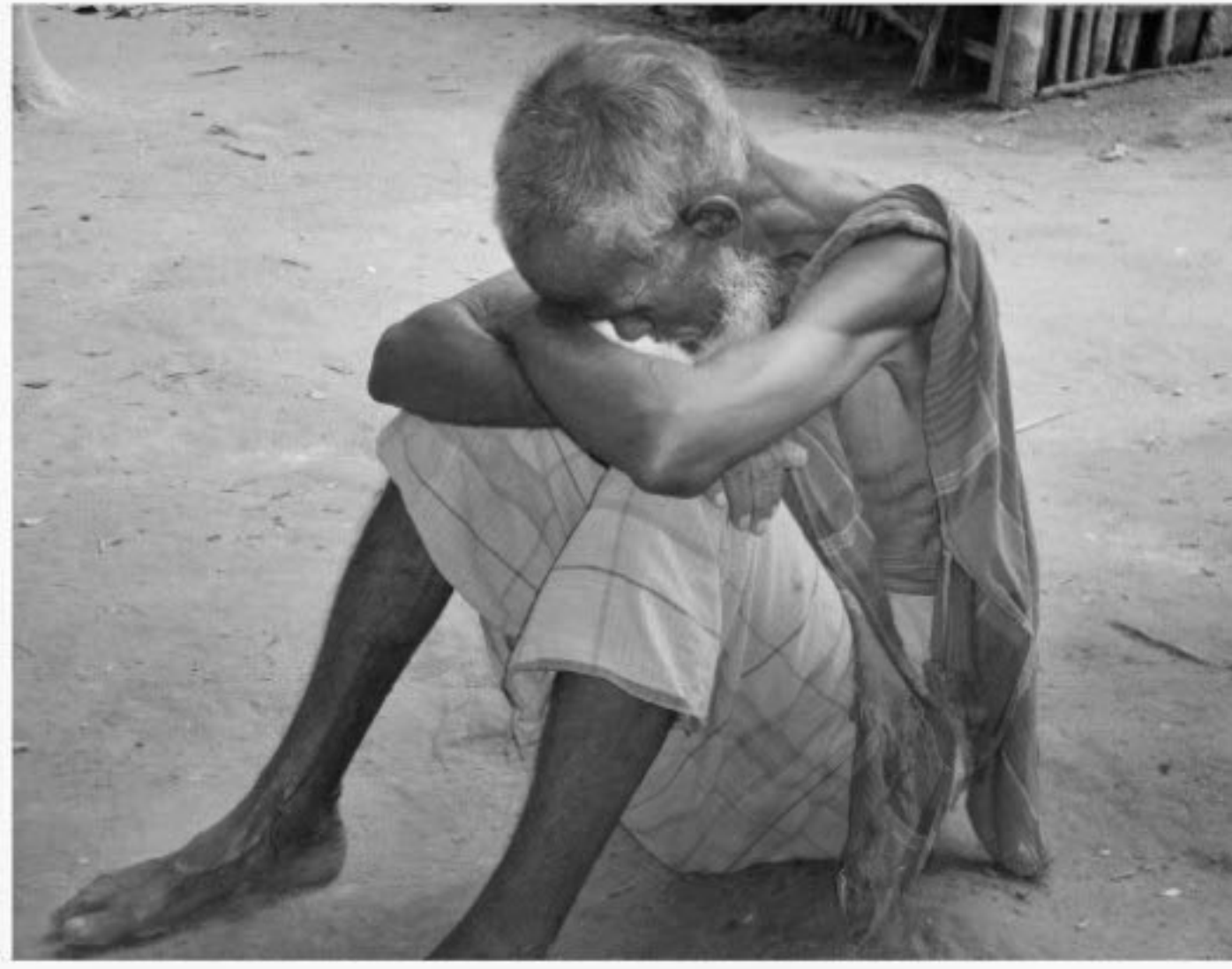


PHOTO: STAR

Ali, 55, a day labourer at Char Gobordhon village in Aditmari upazila.

Mozibor Rahman, 42, of the same village, said, "Due to hardship, I have already sold my labour in advance to a local farm owner for Tk 110 a day whereas we earn Tk 180 to 250 per day by working in the farm during the job period."

"I have borrowed Tk 1,000 from a money lender at my village in mid-April on condition of repaying it with interest of Tk 400 after two months. As I am jobless now, I had no other way to feed my family," Azibor Rahman, 50, a day labourer at char Bowalmari village of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said.

Shahabuddin Ahmed, 60, who cultivated paddy and other crops on his 20 bighas

of land at Kalmati Char village in Lalmonirhat Sadar, said there is no need to employ labourers during this time and so, farm labourers become unemployed.

As this correspondent talked to Unus Bapari, 45, a money lender at Char Milonbazar in Sadar upazila, he claimed that he helps many jobless people through lending money for 'a little interest' during this period.

"Many jobless people with their family members would face starvation if I do not help them," he said in a tone of complacency.

Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila Chairman Nazrul Haque Patwary said 40 to 45 days before the boro harvest every year, farm labourers in *char* areas become jobless

and face *monga*, a near famine situation.

He insisted providing job facilities by the government to mitigate sufferings of the *char* people.

Admitting the unemployment problem faced by the farm labourers at Teesta and Dharla rivers basin areas during this period, Lalmonirhat District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Anwarul Islam said, "Many people from *char* areas have gone to different towns in search of work. However, the problem is a temporary one. People will get work when harvesting of boro paddy starts."

The government has no special initiative to provide employment opportunity for the jobless people in the *char* areas of the district this time, he said.

## Brac official Mohiuddin laid to rest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Mohammad Mohiuddin, a Brac official, who was killed during a deadly gun attack on the NGO's office in Ghor of Afghanistan Thursday morning, was laid to rest at his family graveyard in Fulbaria upazila yesterday.

Amid love and tears of relatives and a huge number of locals, he was buried at Betbari village at night after a namaz-e-janaza following Magrib prayers.

Earlier, an Air Dubai flight carrying the body of Mohiuddin, 41, son of late Muslem Uddin of the village, landed Hazrat Shahjalal (R) International Airport in Dhaka at around 10:30 am.

A pall of gloom descended the area when the victim's body was brought to his ancestral home at about 4:30 pm.

Mohiuddin, a Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) graduate, was working as Brac's area manager in Chaghcharan, the provincial capital there since 2009, said family members.

Talking to this correspondent, Mohiuddin's wife Parveen Akhter, mother of two, said her husband might have been killed in a planned way as no other staffs died in the Taliban attack.

She also urged Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, chairperson of the Brac, to conduct an investigation into the incident.

"Now how would I rear up my children and bear their education costs in absence of Mohiuddin," said Parveen in tears.

Contacted, Moniruzzaman, Brac Mymensingh Sadar area manager, said the authorities have assured the family of giving Tk 10 lakh as compensation.

This is the second incident of Brac official killing in Afghanistan in the last 10 years.

On September 12, 2007, unknown gunmen shot Brac official Abdul Alim, 38, dead during clashes between the Taliban and Afghan security forces.



PHOTO: STAR

**Traders open their business in and around this dilapidated godown during weekly market days at Kutukchhai Bazar in Rangamati Sadar upazila, risking life.**

## A 'risky' LGED godown

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

A dilapidated godown building at Kutukchhai Bazar in Kutukchhari union under Rangamati Sadar upazila poses serious risk for users.

Constructed by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in 1981, the brick built structure was abandoned a few years ago as it turned risky.

"But the building, located in the middle of the market

area, sees thronging of people during weekly market days as traders open their business in and beside the building. With numerous cracks in different parts, the building poses serious risk of casualties as it may collapse anytime," said Santu Bikash Chakma, chairman of Kutukchhari union parishad (UP).

"Several times I asked the LGED authorities orally and in writing to take necessary steps about the matter but

my request went unheeded," he added.

"There are seven such dilapidated go-downs in Rangamati. We have already sent a proposal to the LGED head office for reconstruction of the buildings as those were built on the land of LGED," said Sohrab Ali, executive engineer of Rangamati LGED.

The godown at Kutukchhai Bazar is now under the local UP office, he added.



**BNP men bring out a procession in Thakurgaon town yesterday demanding return of their 'missing' leader Ilias Ali and withdrawal of 'false' cases against their central leaders, right, police intercept a similar party procession at Manikganj town.**

## CHT LAND COMMISSION

# PCJSS demands removal of justice Khadem

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) on Saturday accused the chairman of CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission (CHTLDRC) of ignoring the demands of hill people.

Demanding his removal, the pro-peace deal organisation, in a press release also urged the government to appoint a new impartial chief of the commission.

Chief of CHTLDRC justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury on Thursday heard a few cases related to disputed land in Khagrachhari. He also fixed May 23-24 for next hearing.

The PCJSS alleged that Khademul had been taking decisions unilaterally ignoring the views of other com-

mission members. They termed it as an absolutely anti-peace treaty act and said that he was doing it with ill motive to serve the interest of a certain quarter.

Until or unless the government brings amendment to all contradictory clauses of the land commission as per the recommendations by CHT regional council, the activities of the commission cannot be acceptable to hill people, said the PCJSS.

If the chairman continues such activity, the land disputes in the hills will be more complicated and the process of execution of the peace deal will be hampered, it said.

The PCJSS warned that the government will be held responsible if any anarchy is created in the hills due to this anti-peace activities.

## 'Most enclave people want to be with country they live in'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

Bangladesh unit of Indo-Bangla Enclave Exchange Coordination Committee yesterday made the report on its survey on the opinion of the enclaves' people public.

The committee released the report at a press conference at Kurigram Press Club at 11:50 am. President of the Bangladesh chapter of the committee Md Mainul Haque, general secretary Md Golam Mostafa and president of Dashiara Chara (Indian enclave) unit Md Altaf Hossen were present.

According to survey report, most of the people of the enclaves want to be with the country now they live in.

Golam Mostafa said they conducted survey on more than 50,000 people of 111 Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh in the first week of April this year.

Most of them have expressed their desire to remain with the country

now they live in while only 743 people of 149 families in 17 enclaves want to be part of the mainland, the report said.

About the survey in 51 Bangladesh enclaves inside India, the report said the people living in the enclaves want to become Indian citizens.

The governments of both countries conducted a head count in the enclaves in the middle of July last year. About 34,000 people of 111 Indian enclaves and about 17,000 people of Bangladesh enclaves were counted. Some people could not come under the programme as they went to other districts in search of jobs.

"According to our survey, more than 50,000 people live in 111 Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh," Mostafa said.

The Indian enclaves are situated in Panchagarh, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram while all 51 angladesh enclaves are in Cooch Behar district of Pashchimbarga.

## Buddha Purnima celebrated at Rajban Bihar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Buddha Purnima, one of the biggest religious festivals of Buddhist community, was celebrated yesterday at Rajban Bihar here with religious fervour and solemnity.

Hundreds of devotees remembered the most venerable late Sadhanananda Mohasthabir, widely known as Bana Bhante and paid their respect through offering prayers and placing wreaths on his coffin preserved at Rajban Bihar.

Bana Bhante breathed his last at the age of 93, on January 30, at Square Hospital Ltd in Dhaka.

Venerable Pragma Lanker Mohasthabir, a senior disciple of late Bana Bhante, was recently made chief monk and chief of resident at Rajban Bihar.

The new chief monk delivered his sermon at the gathering while Gayanapriya Bhikkhu also addressed the function yesterday.

In the evening, the devotees lit candles at the Bihar and sought peace and prosperity for all.



PHOTO: STAR